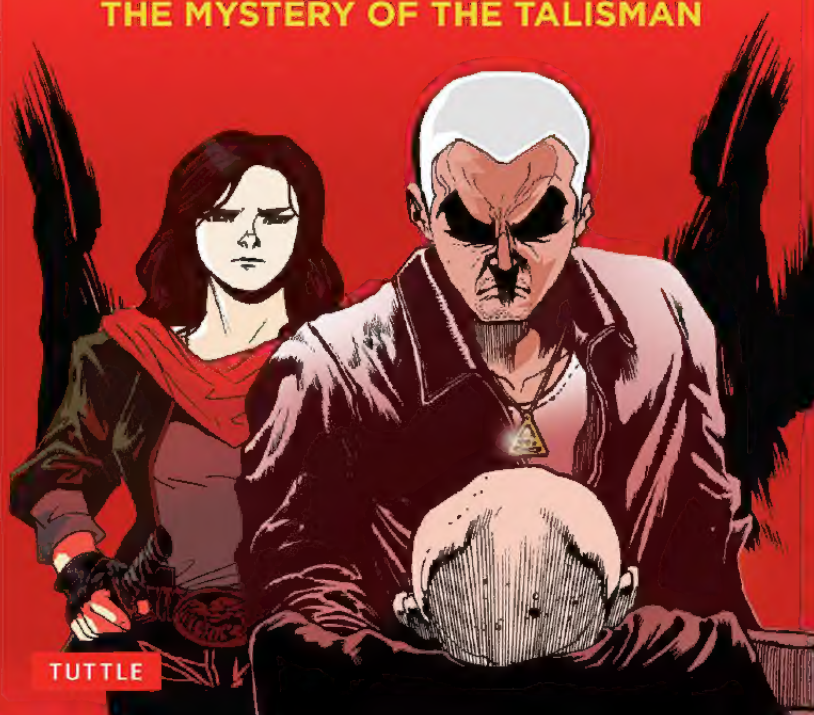


A graphic novel by **ARNOLD ARRE**

THE WORLD OF **ANDONG AGIMAT**

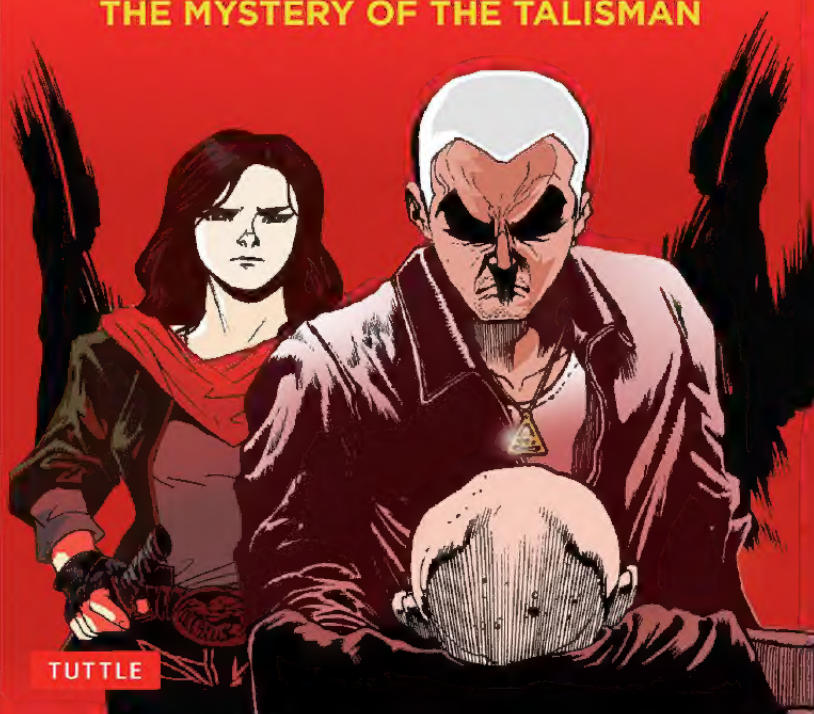
THE MYSTERY OF THE TALISMAN



A graphic novel by **ARNOLD ARRE**

THE WORLD OF **ANDONG AGIMAT**

THE MYSTERY OF THE TALISMAN



ANDONG AGIMAT

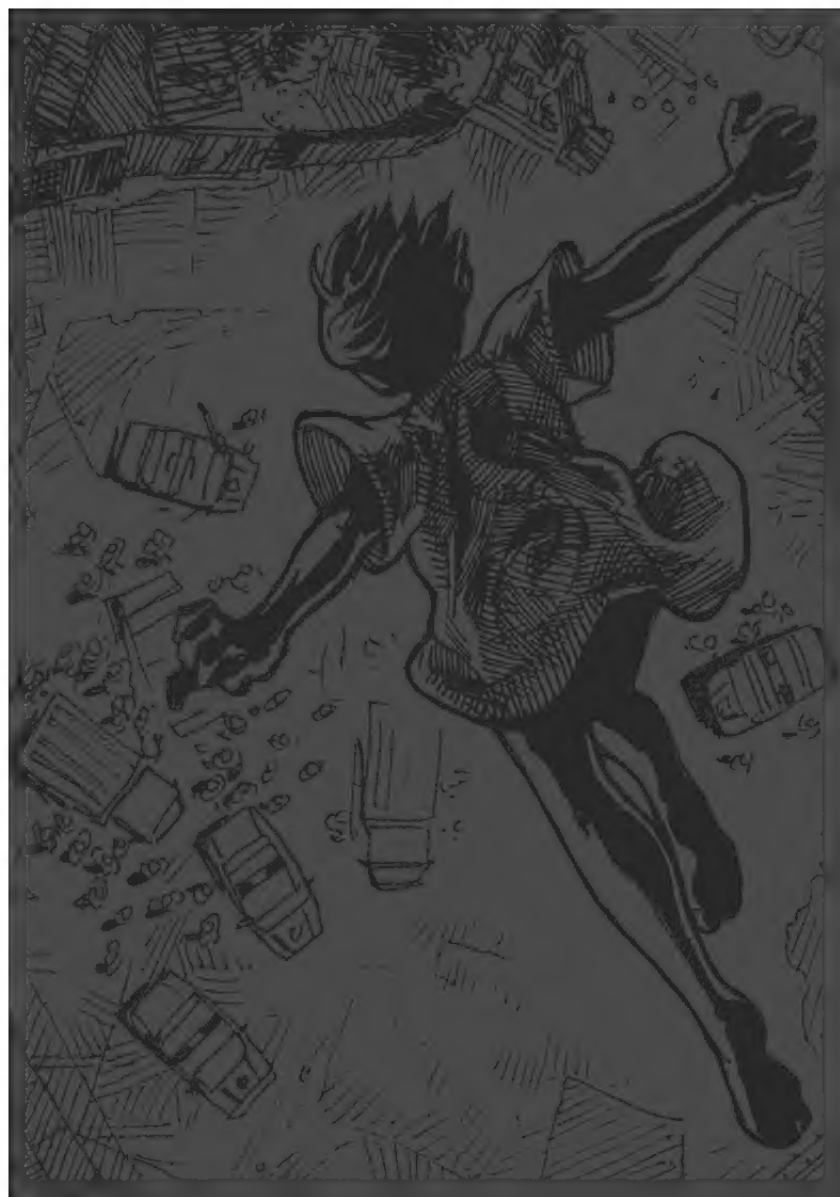
THE MYSTERY OF THE TALISMAN

A graphic novel by
ARNOLD ARRE



TUTTLE Publishing

Tokyo | Rutland, Vermont | Singapore



"What would you like you see in a superhero comic?"

That was the question Arnold asked us in the wake of the resurgence of interest in Darna perpetuated by the new comic book and talk of a movie and TV series.

Of course, Arnold already had something in mind when he asked our opinion about this distinctly American invention: a being gifted with powers and abilities greater than that of an ordinary person who fights injustice in a colorful circus costume.

Coming from depression-era immigrant creators in New York, the superhero is the most identifiable symbol of American comics. I stress the term American because the superhero is not the most popular image in comics from other cultures. And even when the superhero is transplanted to other cultures, the concept takes on different permutations such as the bug-headed riders and crayon colored rangers in Japan, kung fu fighters in China, amoral thieves in Italy and masked luchadores in Mexico.

In the Philippines, while Mars Ravelo borrowed heavily from American iconic figures such as Superman, Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman, other super heroic figures without the colorful costumes have been popular. The heroic "agimat" stories and movies have been popular to Filipinos and can be traced to our myths and legends.

With Mythology Class, Arnold went back to these myths and legends. With his interest in FPJ and Ramon Revilla action movies, he now brings these legends to the streets. So what kind of superheroes did Arnold have in mind? Superheroes without the cultural trappings of American comics. Superheroes steeped in mythology but sharpened by the dirty grey tabloid world. Superheroes that are different and yet familiar. New and yet remembered.

The world of Andong Agimat.

Emil Flores
Quezon City
January 2006

I think storytellers tend to be unsatisfied people. After all, why else would we go around creating our own worlds, reshaping reality, analyzing people's thinking processes and behaviors to put actions and words into characters we control? I think a lot of storytellers are not content with simply recounting and recording the reality we see around us. We feel that the universe can be better, or if not necessarily better, can have more meaning to it.

And we storytellers aren't only unsatisfied with reality. We are often unsatisfied even with the fictional realities crafted by other storytellers. Heck, we are often unsatisfied with the stories we ourselves have written in the past. So we constantly create new stories, and we deconstruct and pick apart the world around us and the stories we consume and then try to reconstruct new stories in our never ending quest to find a satisfaction that deep inside we know will never come.

Arnold Arre is definitely one storyteller who is constantly unsatisfied. I've read (and published) most of his works and it's clear Arnold is always trying to imagine a better world and better stories. The *Mythology Class* showed how unsatisfied he is with the mundane real world and with the Westernized escapist fantasies meant to take readers away from it. *Trip to Tagaytay* showed his dissatisfaction with the present Philippines and the existing takes on what the future of the Philippines would be. *Martial Law Babies*, *After Eden*, and *Halina Filipina* all showed many examples of his distaste

for how low a lot of local pop culture has fallen, how superficial love stories have become, and how the mindset of Filipinos has devolved. All his graphic novels have taken the various tropes of past stories and used them to reconstruct new realities, characters, and experiences that make readers believe in a better and/or more meaningful world.

With *Ang Mundo ni Andong Agimat*, Arnold takes on genres whose main purpose is to allow readers to escape reality: superheroes and Filipino fantasy/action movies. These are stories that grew popular precisely because of both the readers and storytellers need to escape reality. But as the popularity of these genres have grown, the tropes that make up their structure have become worn out. So Arnold again works his magic and embraces the elements that allows these stories to do what they do best, but reconstructs and combines them in new ways that create a whole new story that does more than allow for escapism. With each scene, with each character's line, it made me imagine Arnold reading old superhero comics or watching old Filipino films and telling himself, "This could be so much better. This could do so much more. Audiences deserve better. The world deserves better." And as I turn the final page of this graphic novel, I feel he has shown us that indeed, something better was possible. And that's what the main character of Andong (and all the other characters in this Filipino epic) face in this story: a constant desire to be better, to

make the world better, because they aren't satisfied with who they are or the world around them.

I can't wait to see what type of stories Arnold will come up with next, what brilliant new realities he will create for us. It may be mean of me to say so, but I hope the world continues to irritate and dissatisfy him, like grains of sand irritating a clam and forcing it to turn them into beautiful pearls to find relief. I hope the man is never satisfied, because as a reader I will never be satisfied no matter how many amazing stories he produces.

JAMIE BAUTISTA

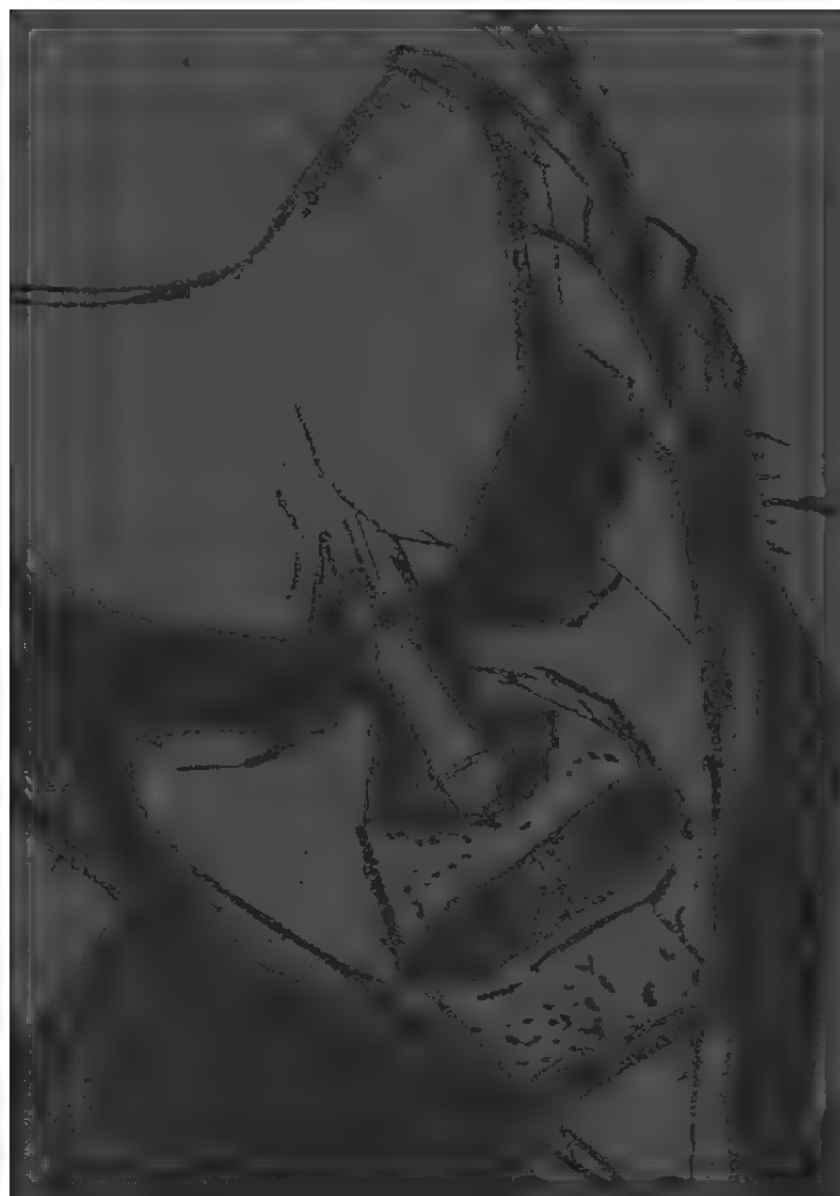
Alabang
September 2017







Para kay Cynthia... ang liwanag sa aking mundo.



Whether you believe it or not, my grandfather says, there was a time in our world when it was ruled by the strongest and most powerful beings on the face of the earth.

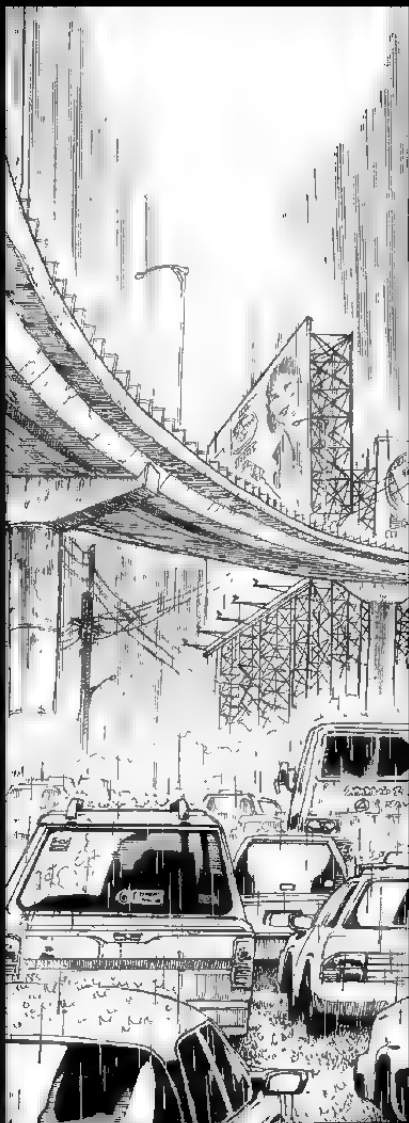
Some of them became guardians of justice... Defending the oppressed.

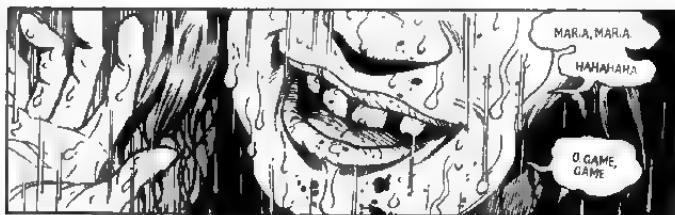
Others, however, became servants of darkness... Arriving to spread a gruesome plague among the population.

And from the century of conflict between these two forces were born the colorful stories of courage and bravery that shaped their world.

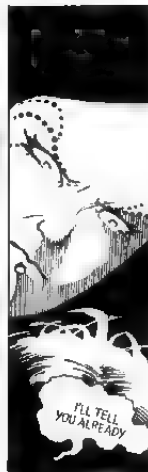
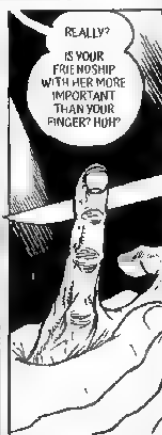
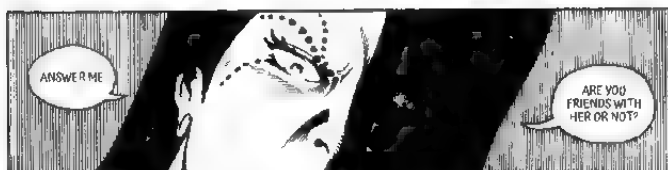
This is a world covered in miracles and wonders.

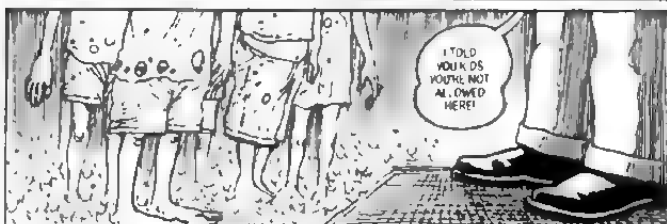
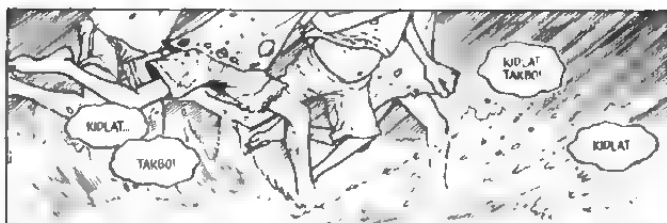
This is the world of Andong Agimat.





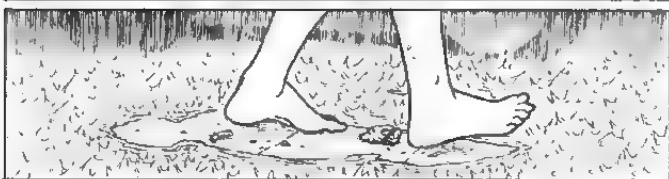
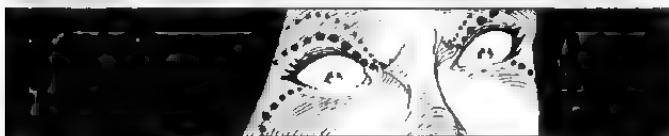
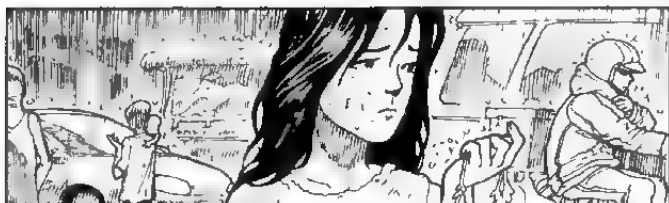


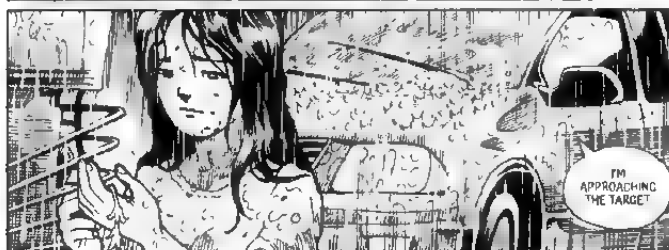








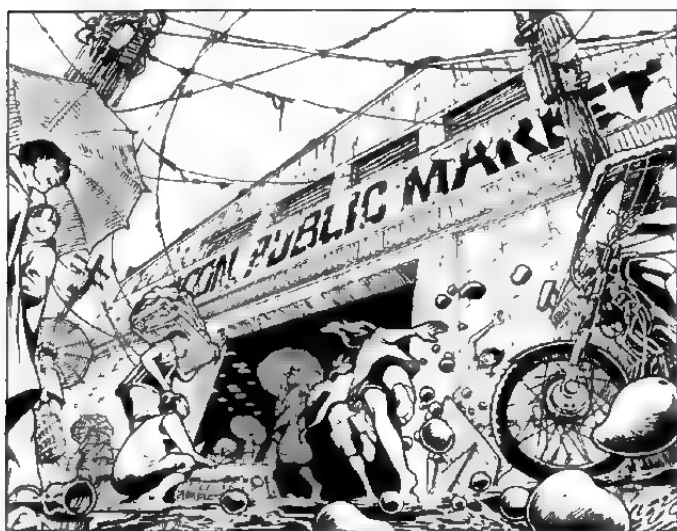


















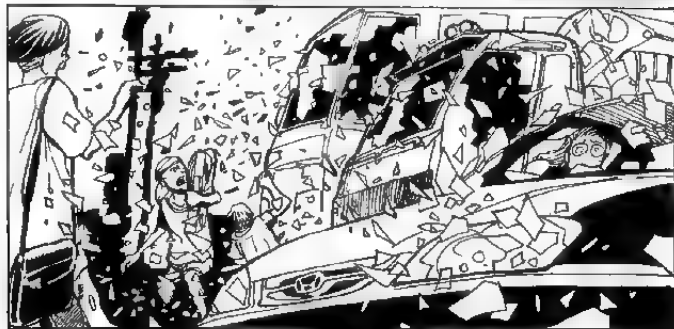
"WHY ARE YOU
DOING THIS?"



"HAVE I DONE
SOMETHING
WRONG?"



"PLEASE DON'T
HURT ME"





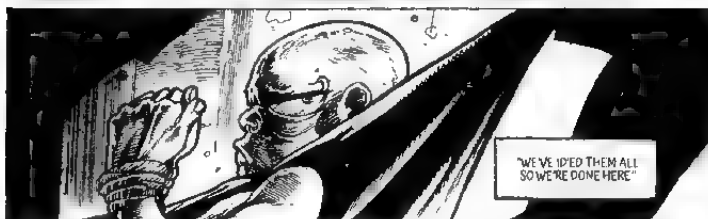






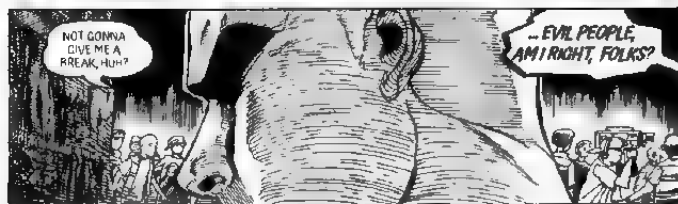






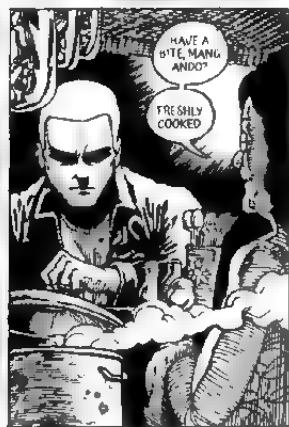
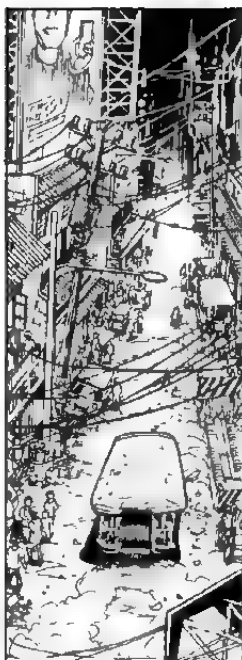










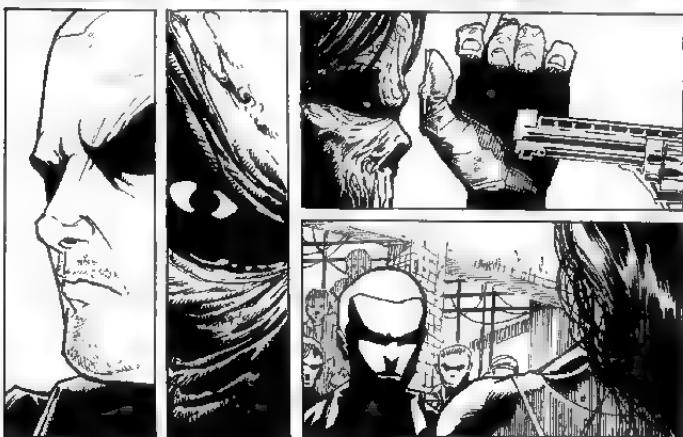


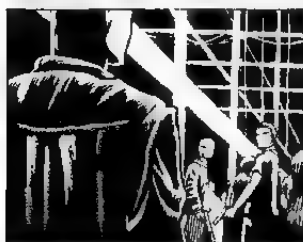
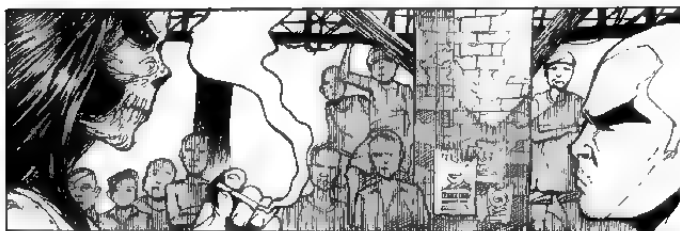


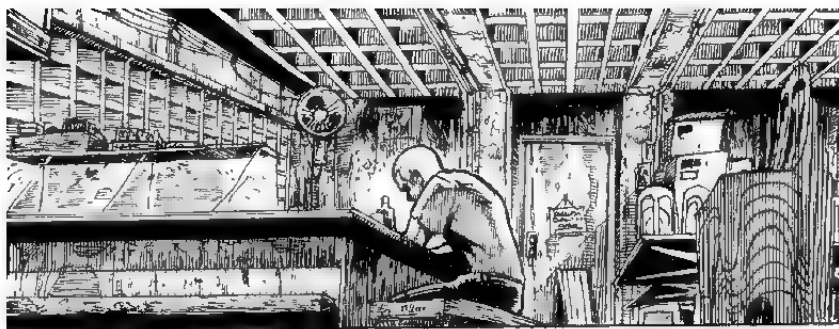






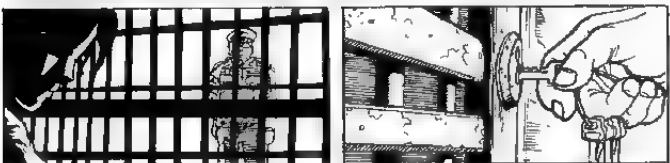
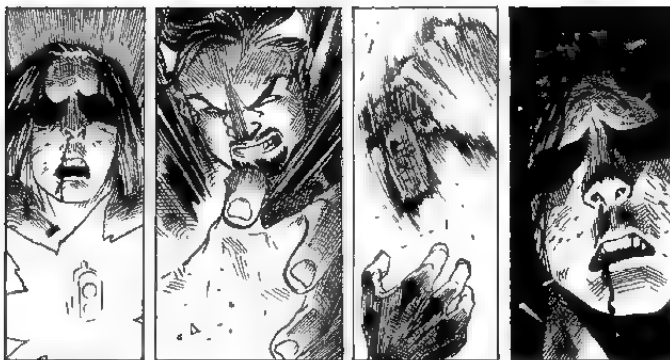




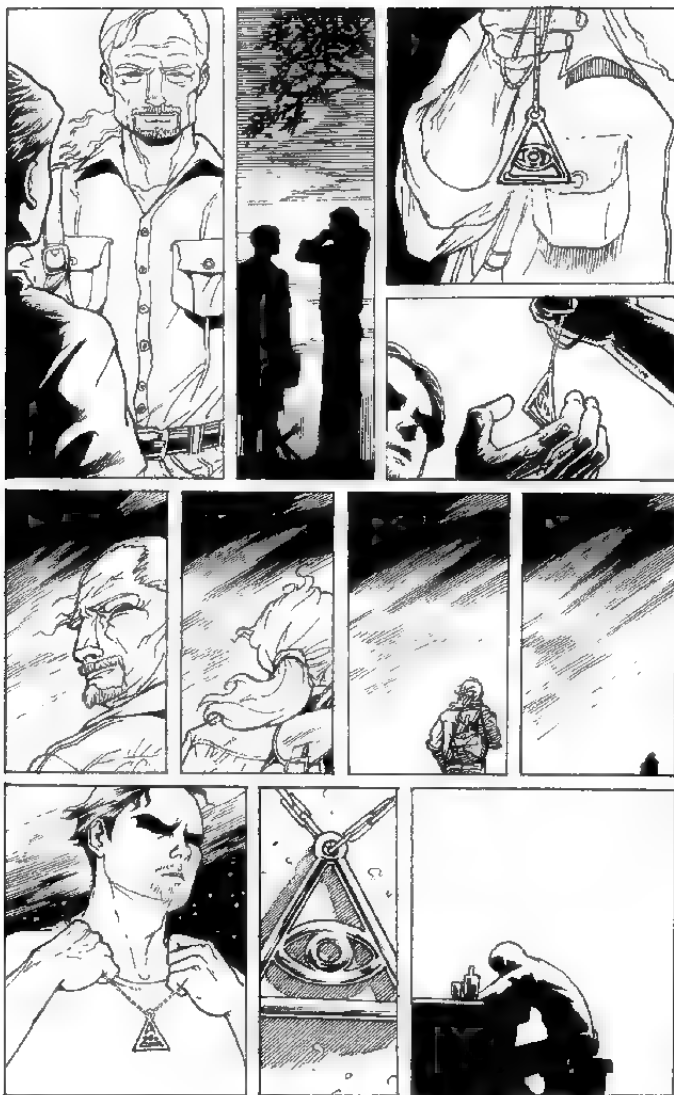


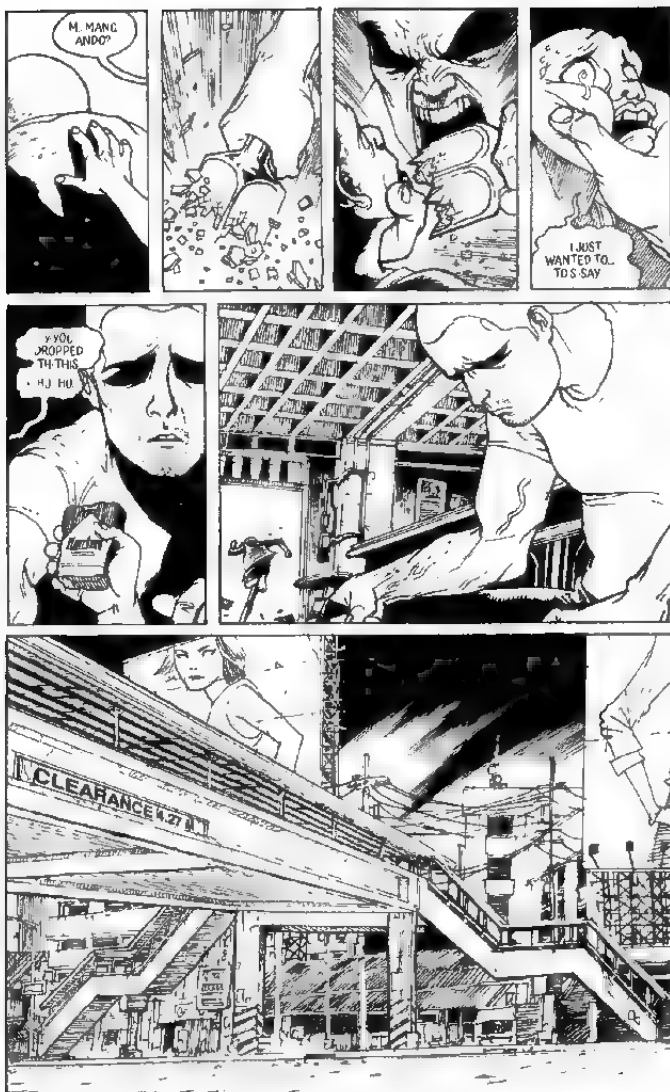


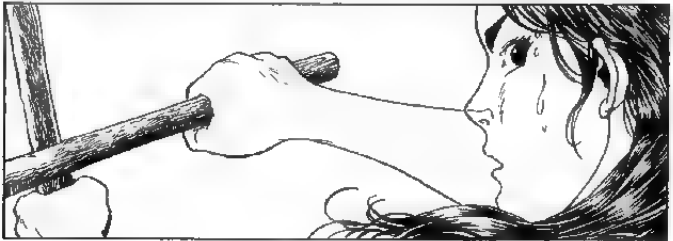
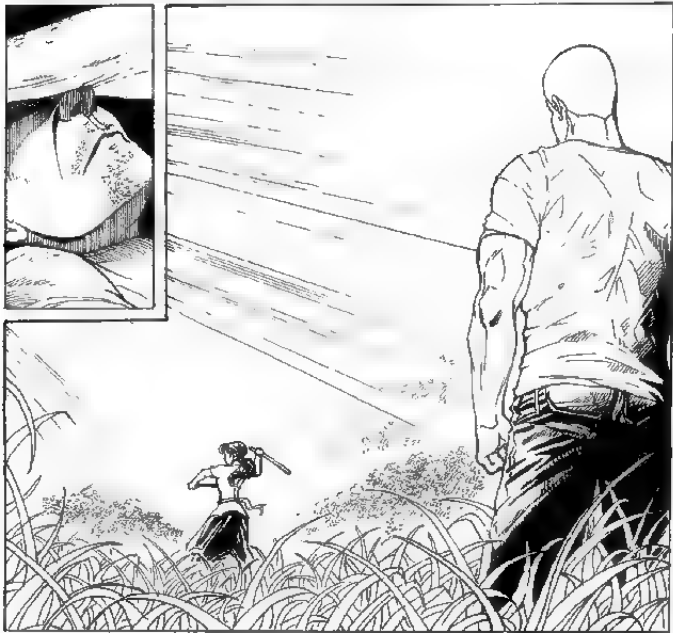
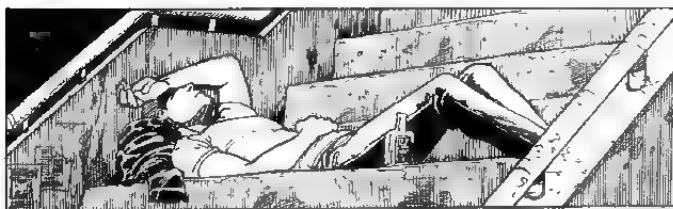








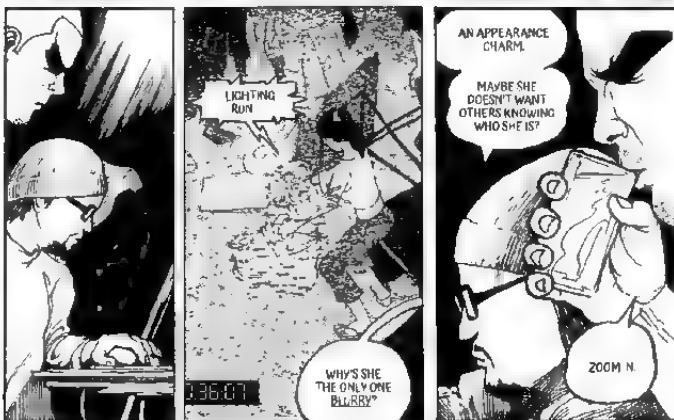


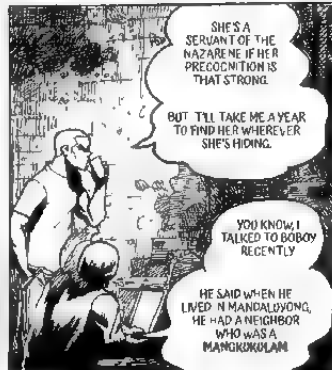


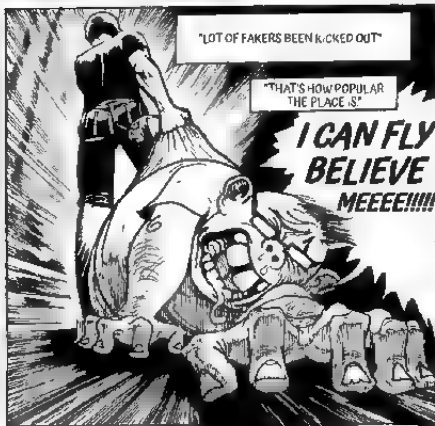


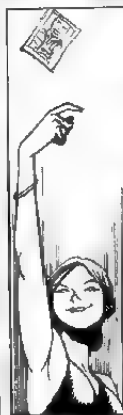




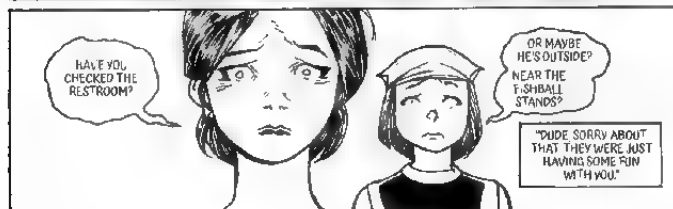














THEY YOUR
NEW FRIENDS?

DISRESPECTFUL
HOODS?

NO, MAN,
THEY'RE
REALLY NICE

THEY DIDN'T
EVEN CHARGE
YOU FOR THE
STEREO YOU
SHOT UP

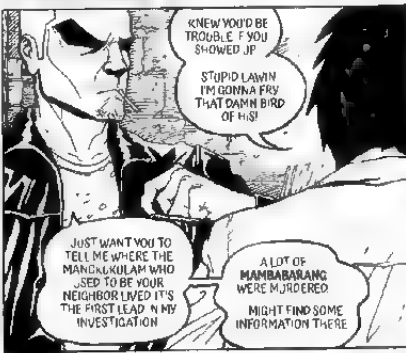
AND THEY
GAVE ME
A JOB.



AND DUDE,
THEY CALL ME
BOBOY HERE

I'M NOT
"BOY BATO"
ANYMORE. THAT
WAS SO LAME

YEAH, NOW
YOU'RE SO NOT
LAME YOU PICK
UP BOTTLE CAPS
FOR A LIVING.



KNEW YOU'D BE
TROUBLE IF YOU
SHOWED UP

STUPID LAMIN
I'M GONNA FRY
THAT DAMN BIRD
OF HIS!

JUST WANT YOU TO
TELL ME WHERE THE
MANDALUKUAM WHO
USED TO BE YOUR
NEIGHBOR LIVED IT'S
THE FIRST LEAD IN MY
INVESTIGATION

A LOT OF
MAMBARANG
WERE MURDERED
MIGHT FIND SOME
INFORMATION THERE



YEAH, HEARD
ABOUT THAT

WELL, SHE WAS OLD
WHITE HAIR SHORT

MMH!

LAST TIME I SAW HER
WAS WHEN LIVED IN
MANDALUYONG.

SHE HAD A
COMPANION WITH HER

A COMPANION?

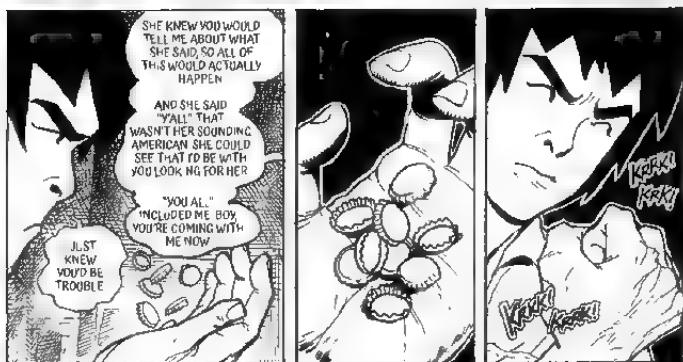
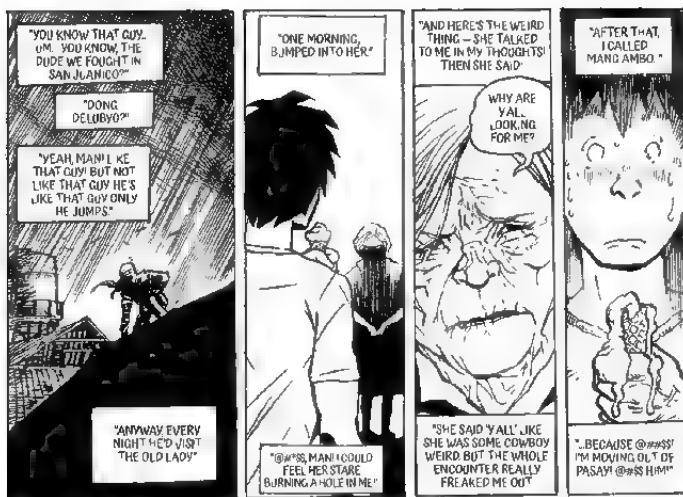


THE DUSK WITH HER
REGULARLY I DIDN'T GET
A GOOD LOOK AT HIM'S NICE
IT WAS RAINING AT THE TIME

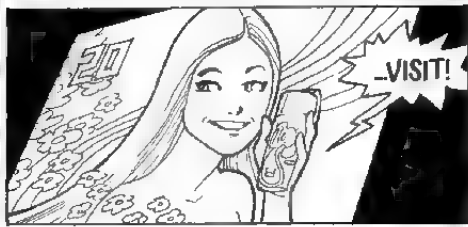
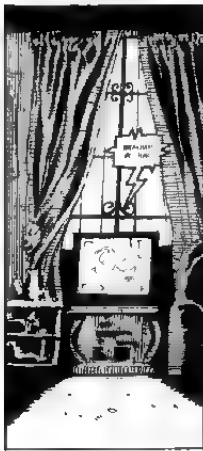
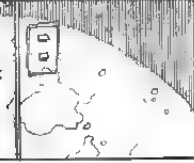
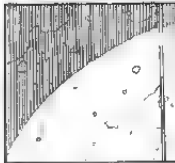
"BUT HE
WAS FAST"

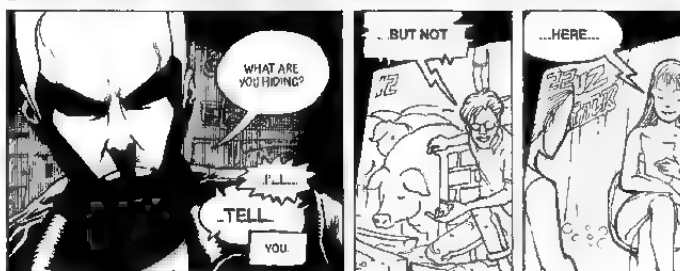
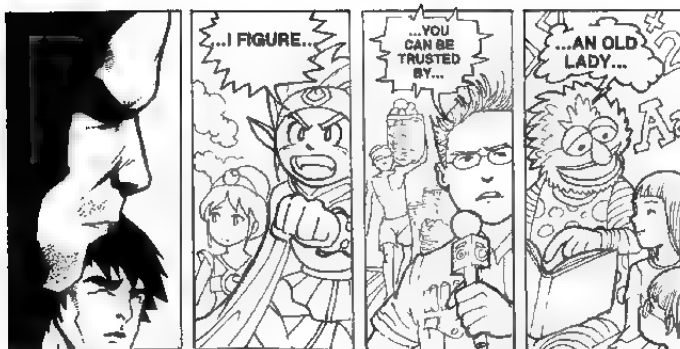
HAD SOMETHING
COVERING HIS
FACE

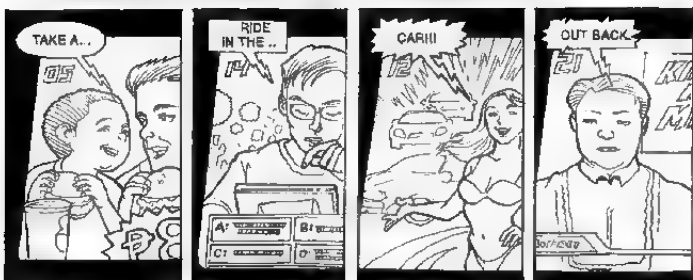
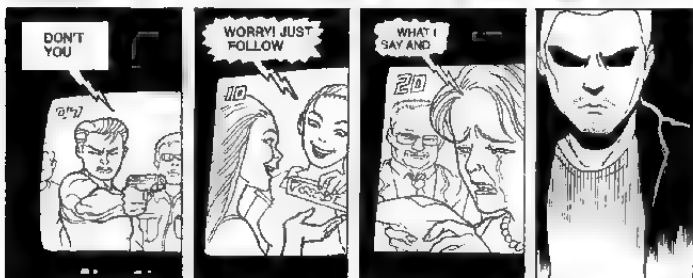
HE'D COME AROUND TOWARD
THE MORN NG. HE'D LEAP
ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS.
BUT WITHOUT A SOUND
DUDE AMAZING!







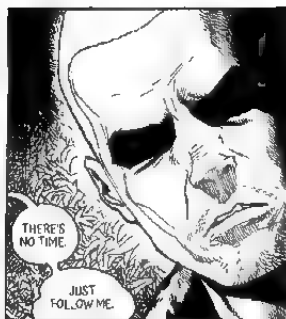


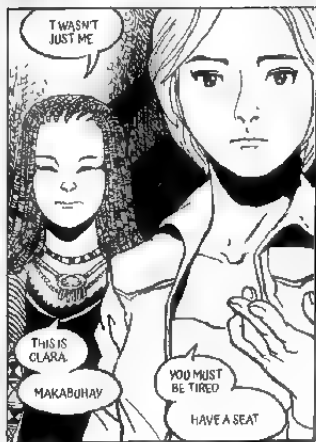
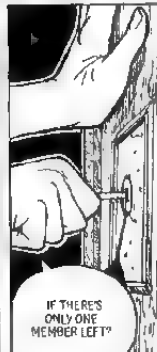
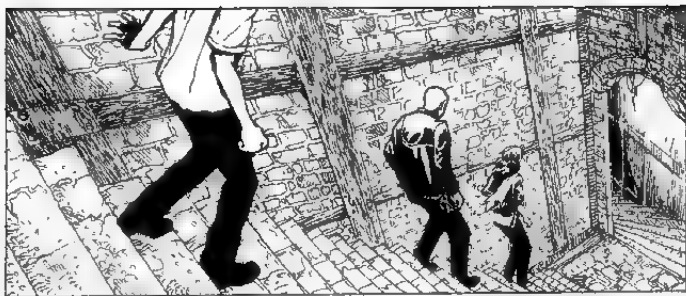






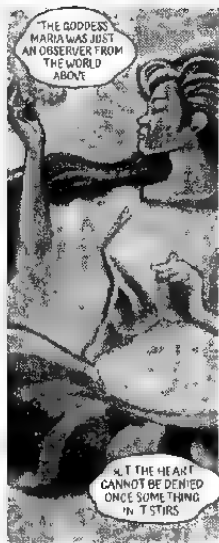












THE GODDESS
MARIA WAS JUST
AN OBSERVER FROM
THE WORLD
ABOVE

YET THE HEART
CANNOT BE DENIED
ONCE SOMETHING
IN IT STIRS



IT BEAT FOR
A MORTAL, A
KATHUMERO WHO
SACRIFICED IN HER
WOODS

WHO DEFENDED
MARIA'S HOME
FROM THE INVADING
HARDBEATS WHO WERE
DESECRATING IT IN
THE NAME OF
WEAPONS AND WAR



THAT IS WHEN
MARIA FELT FOR
THE FIRST TIME
TRUE LOVE

SHE TOOK
HUMAN FORM AND
REVEALED HERSELF
TO HIM

SHE THANKED
HIM

AND SO STARTED
AN AFFECTION THAT
WOULD GROW INTO
A LOVE FOR
THE AGES



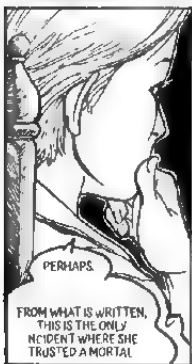
BETWEEN A
GODDESS AND
A MORTAL

MARIA IS THE
ONE WHO PURSUED
THE MAN, NOT THE
OTHER WAY AROUND
FROM WHAT
I KNOW

ALSO, THE MAN KNEW
FROM THE START
THAT IT WAS A DIWATA
WHO HAD FALLEN
FOR HIM

BECAUSE
SUPPOSEDLY
MARIA ALREADY
TOLD HIM WHAT
SHE REALLY WAS

THAT'S HOW
INTENSE IT IS
WHEN A DIWATA
FALLS IN LOVE



PERHAPS

FROM WHAT IS WRITTEN,
THIS IS THE ONLY
INCIDENT WHERE SHE
TRUSTED A MORTAL



BUT THEY
DIDN'T
LAST
RIGHT?

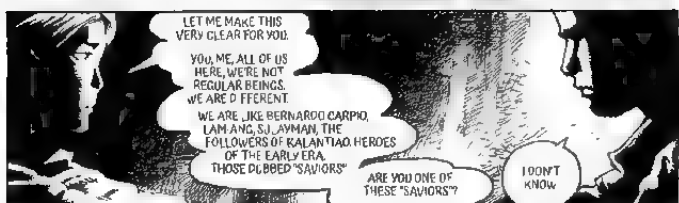
BECAUSE
THAT WAS A
FORBIDDEN
LOVE, RIGHT?

ONE WAS
MORTAL...
AND THE
OTHER

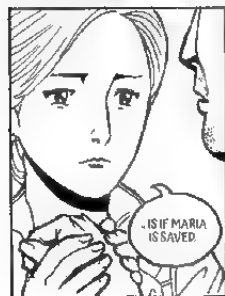


ALL WE KNOW
IS THAT MARIA
WAS CURSED
BECAUSE OF
THEIR LOVE

THE CURSE OF
FORGETFUL
NESS

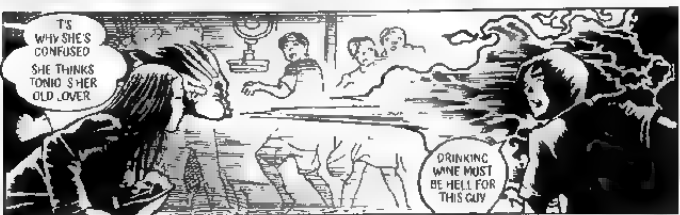
















AND, IT'S
IMPORTANT THAT
WE RESCUE MARIA

NOTICE THE "DARKNESS"
AROUND US

THE CHAOS AND CREED
NATURE ITSELF IS
ANGRY AT US

ALL OF THIS
IS HAPPENING
BECAUSE MARIA
HAS FORGOTTEN
WHO SHE IS

ALSO BECAUSE
OF THE UTTER
DESPAIR SHE
FEELS



YOU KNOW THE
WORLD'S BEEN A
MESS FOR A LONG
TIME

THE CHAOS
WE'RE SEEING
NOW, SINCE ANY
THAT HAS COME
BEFORE, AND YOU
KNOW THAT

YOU'RE SAYING
THE WORLD WILL
FIX ITSELF IF YOU
SAVE HER?



IF ONLY IT WERE
THAT EASY

BUT NOTHING
IS CERTAIN
EVEN I

WE SIMPLY
WISH TO SAVE
SOMEONE WE
CONSIDER TO BE
A SISTER

THAT IS
ALL



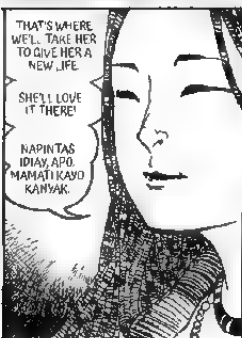
OK—
LET'S SAY YOU
SAVE HER

WHAT THEN?

THERE'S AN ISLAND
IN BATANES—
"AMAMUAN"

IT'S THE LAND OF
CLARA'S
ANCESTORS

THE "SPIRIT"
OF THE SOUL IS
STILL STRONG
THERE AS IT'S LARGELY
UNINHABITED



THAT'S WHERE
WE'LL TAKE HER
TO GIVE HER A
NEW LIFE

SHE'LL LOVE
IT THERE!

NAPINTAS
IDAY, APO.
MAMATI KAYO
KANYAK



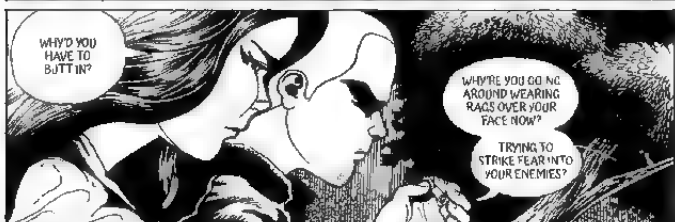
IF WE'RE LUCKY...

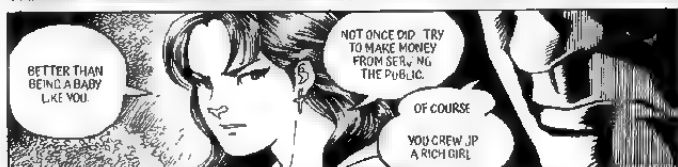


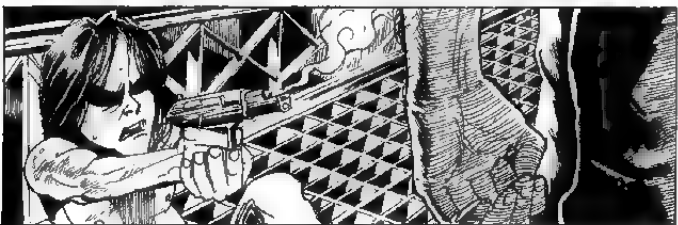
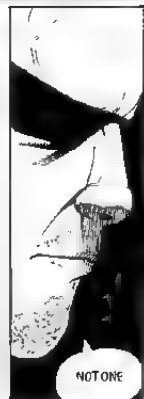
SHE MIGHT
REMEMBER
WHO SHE IS

YOU'VE REALLY
THOUGHT OF
EVERYTHING,
HAVEN'T YOU





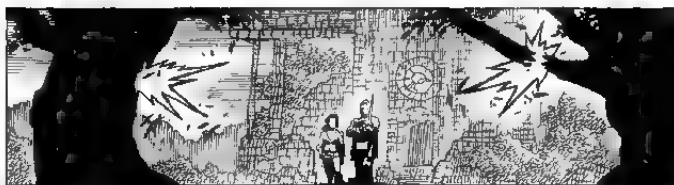


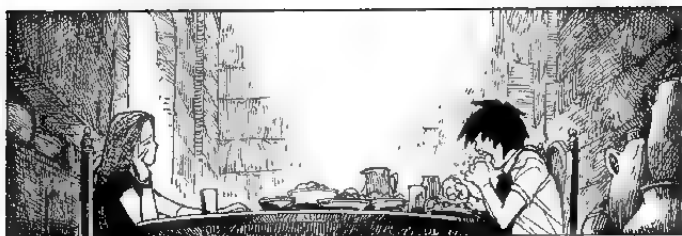














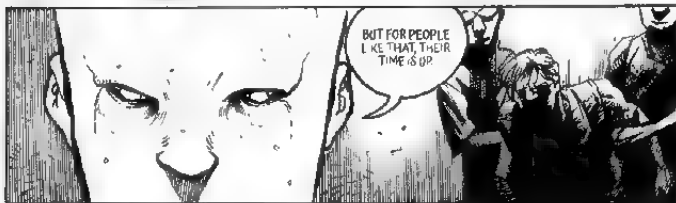
"CALL ME FATHER"

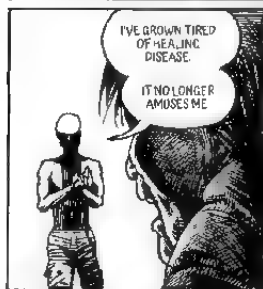
"THOSE WHO CALL
ME JUNE"

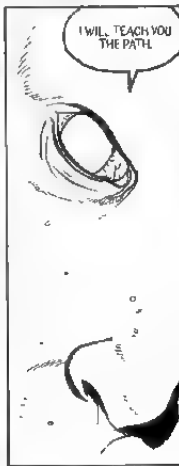
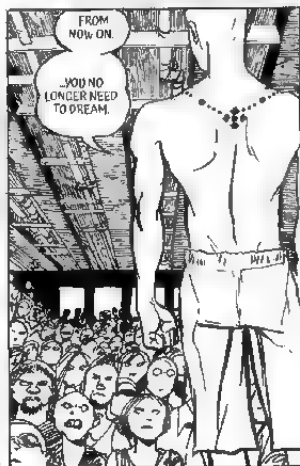
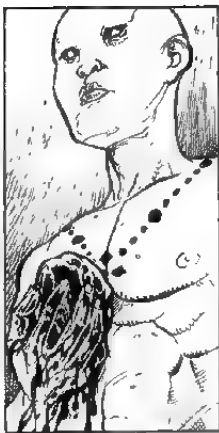
"...ARE NOT LONG FOR
THIS WORLD"

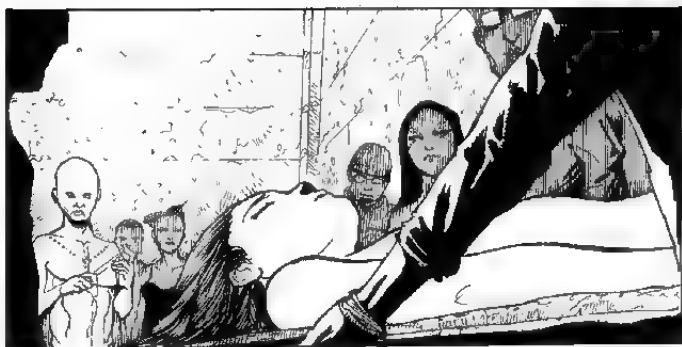




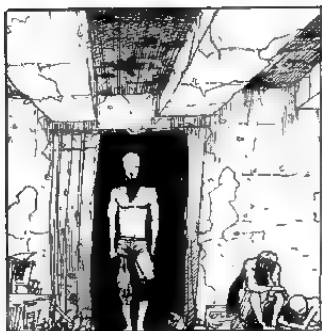








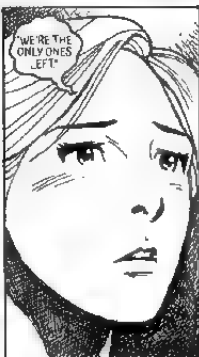


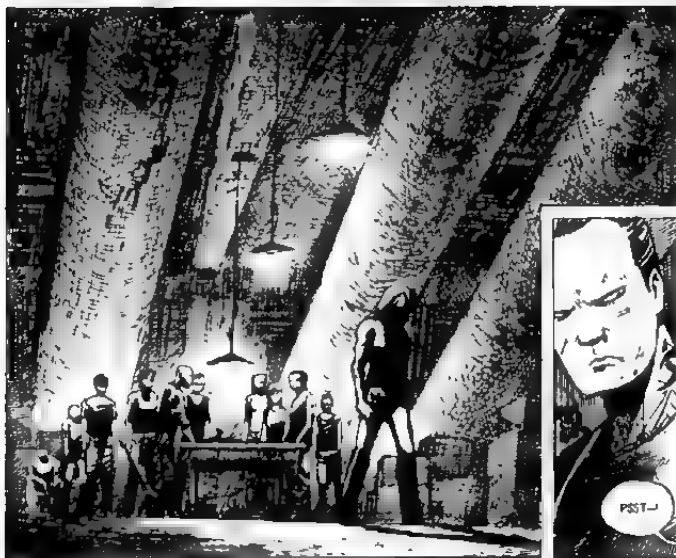
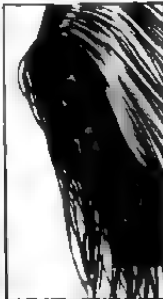






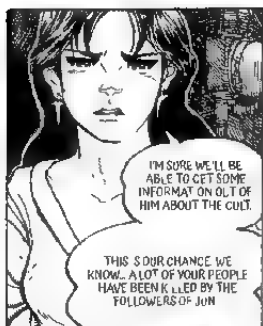






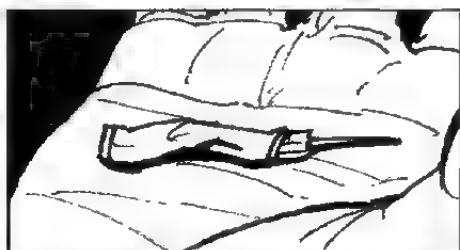






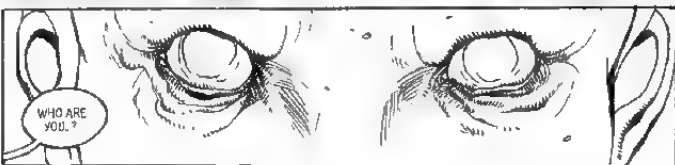
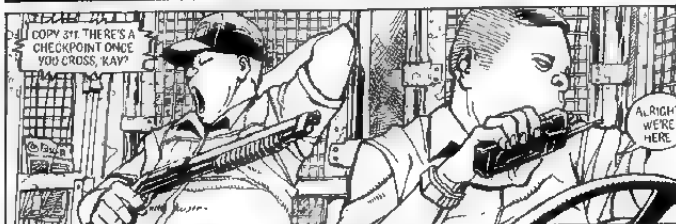
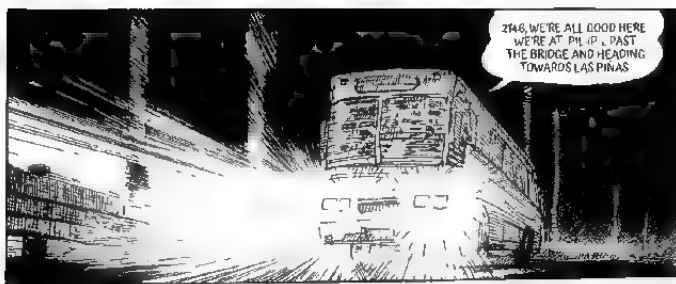


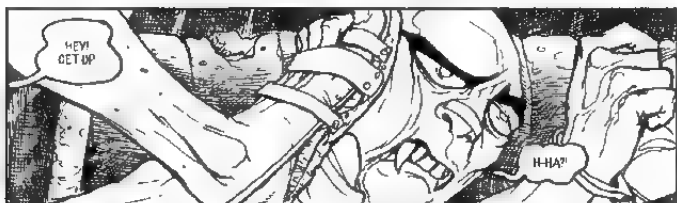












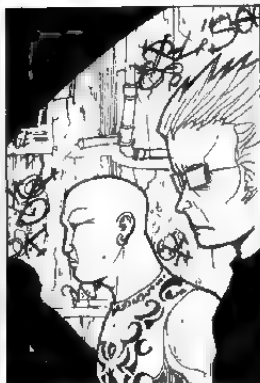


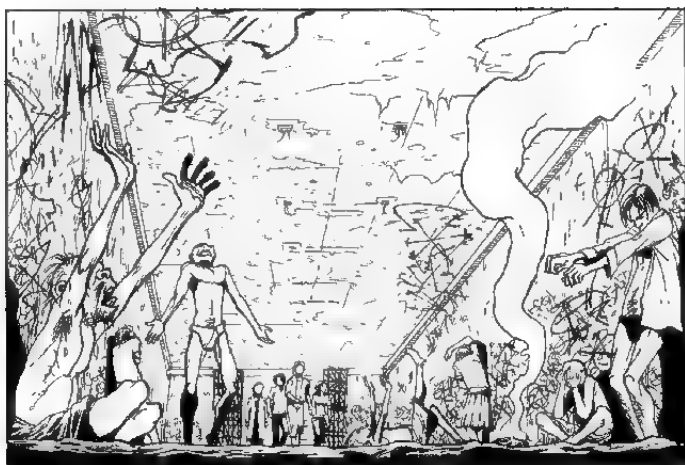


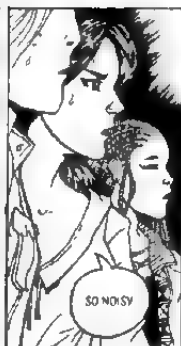
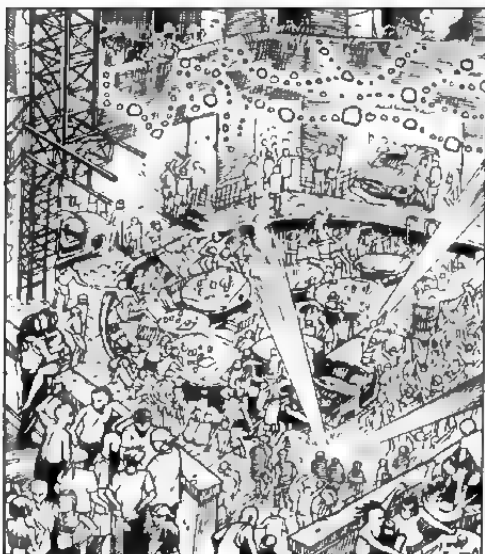












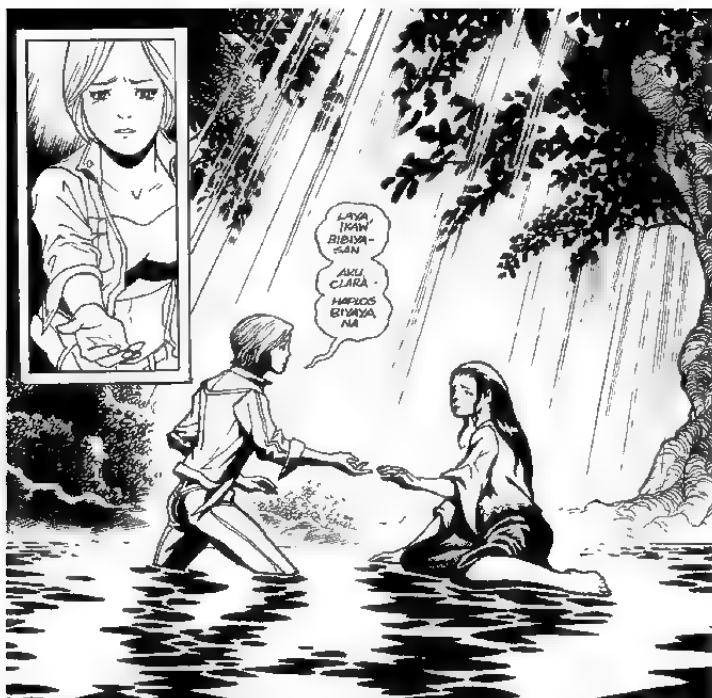


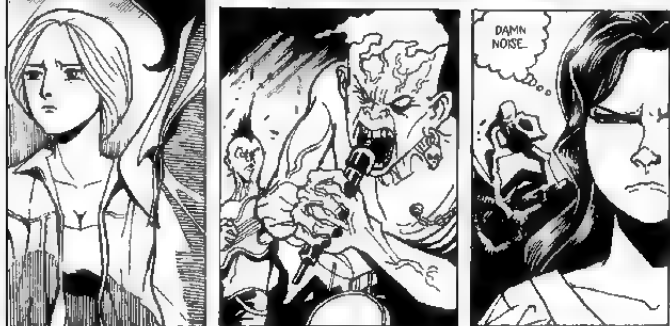
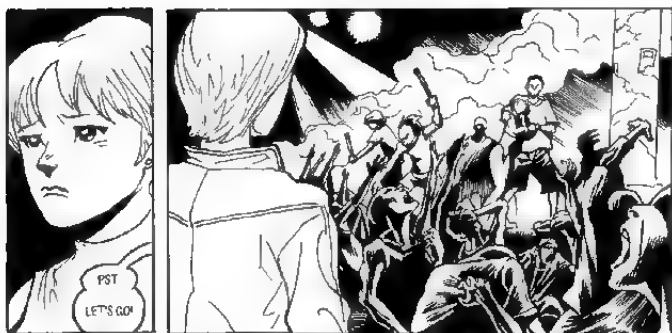


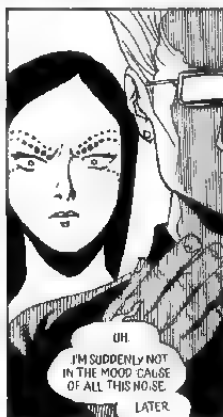














IS BETH MERCADO
REPORTING LIVE—
BETH WHAT'S THE
SITUATION
LAS PIRAS?

TWO VICTIMS OF JUN
ERETEO HAVE BEEN
RUSHED TO A NEARBY
HOSPITAL. KA ERN EI

BYE MANG
ANDO

COMON
LET'S GO!



I KNOW THE ESCAPED
CONVICTS—
WE CAN CONFIRM

FEDERICO NANCHE
ALSO KNOWN AS
PEDRO PANGOL



—ALONG WITH
ALL THE
MEMBERS OF HIS
PANGOL GANG

SOM
OF A



THE AUTHORITIES ARE
ON HIGH ALERT AS THE
SEARCH CONTINUES

AND THE
HITS KEEP
COMING

NOY
CAN GET SOME
SMOKES?



ALL OUT
BUT YOU CAN
HAVE MY
LAST ONE



YOU KNOW I JUST
CAUGHT THAT
CRAZY SUMBITCH
HE'S GONNA
HAVE ME DOING
OVERTIME THIS WEEK
GETTING HIM BACK

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE
GOING TO BE SEEING
ME HERE A LOT
MORE, NOY



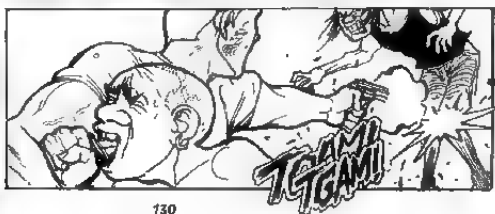
NOY?
HE'S ON
LEAVE, ANDO









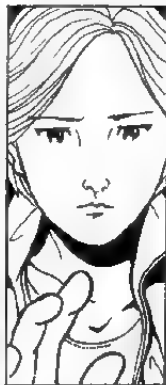












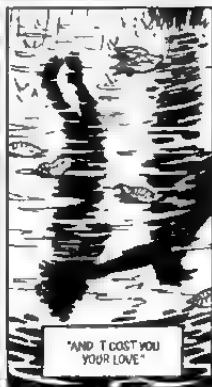


"AND THIS
IS WHERE I
DISCOVERED
THE TRUTH"



"YOU'D BEEN HIDING
FOR SO LONG FROM
THE SPANISH WHO
WERE HIS SERVANTS"

"ALL THAT SUFFERING
JUST BECAUSE YOU
REFUSED TO JOIN HIM -
AN ALLY OF DARKNESS"

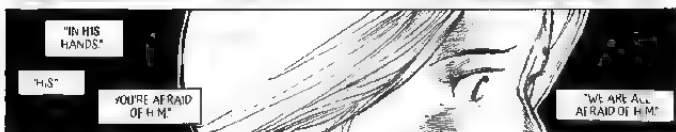
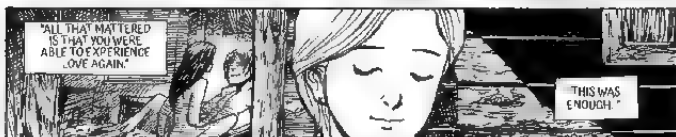


"AND IT COST YOU
YOUR LOVE"

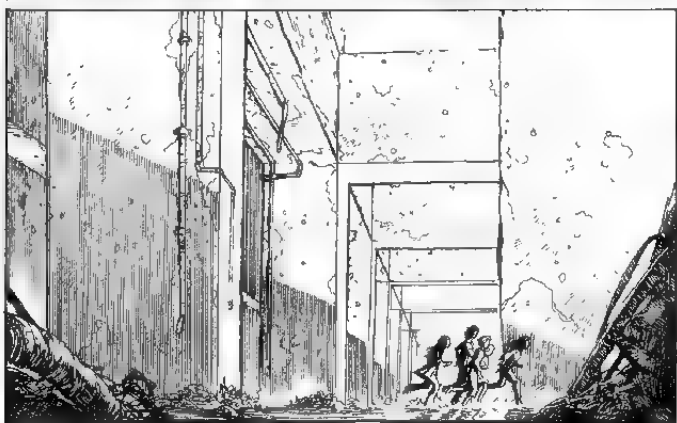


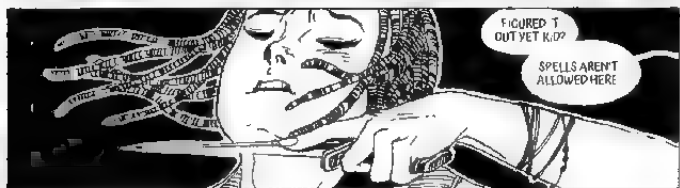












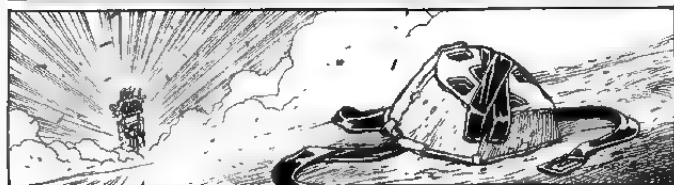




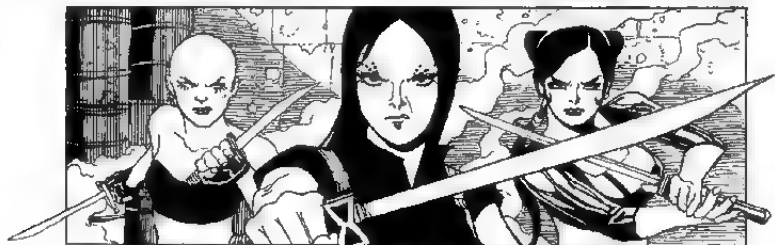
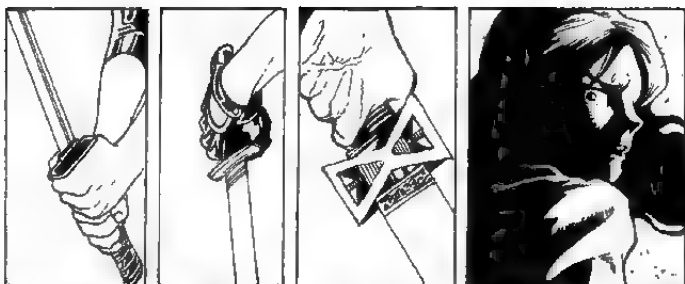








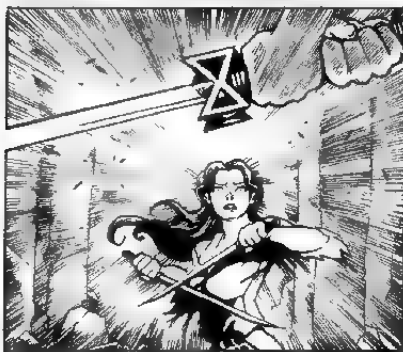
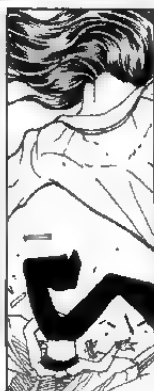




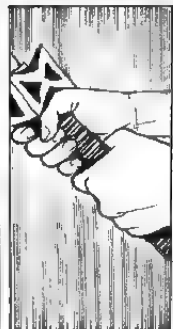






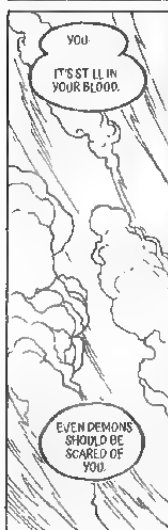
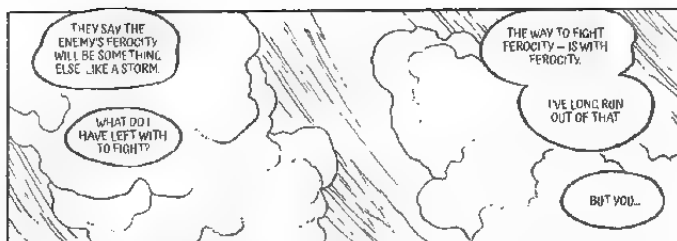








"WHAT THE OLD GEEZER
SAID WAS RIGHT! DARK
TIMES ARE COMING!"



" HE'S BEEN
REPLACED BY A
PROTECTOR."



HOW WAS MY
ENTRANCE?

THANKS...

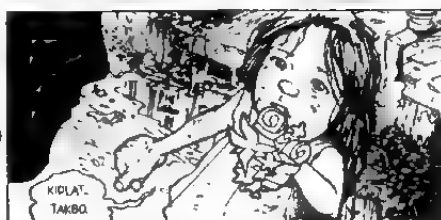
BRAG LATER

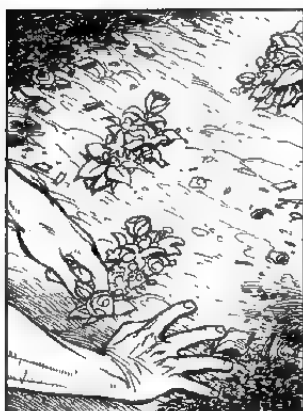
"WE'VE GOT
WORK TO DO."

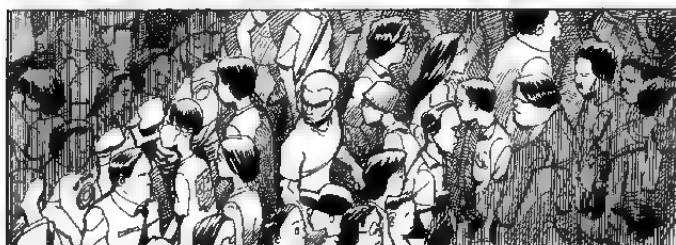
I GET IT WHEN
YOU SAY JUN'S
BOSS IS A DEVIL...

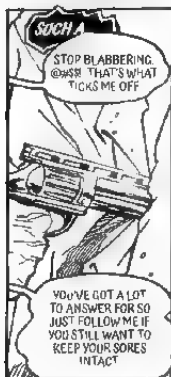
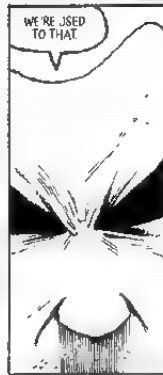
BET ALL THE GUDES DATING
MY SISTER ARE*

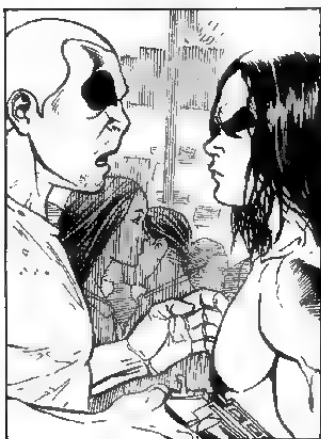
BUT IF YOU MEAN HE IS A LITERAL DEVIL,
THAT'S A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME, AND...

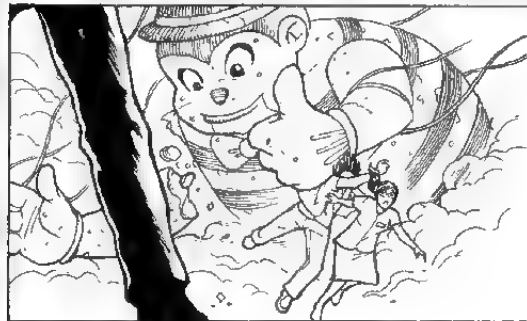
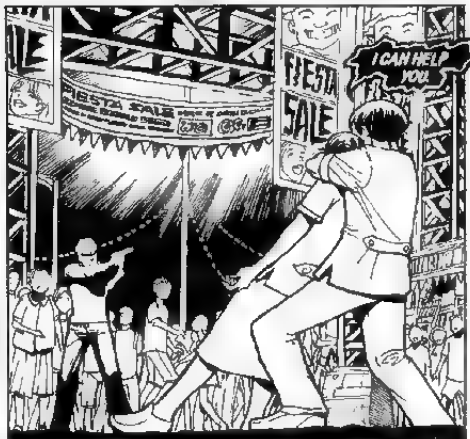


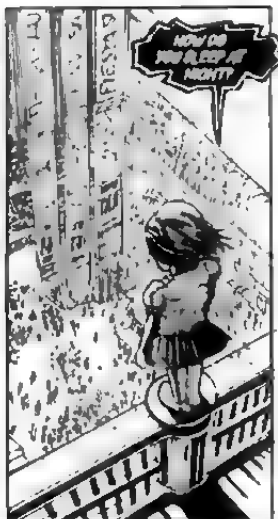


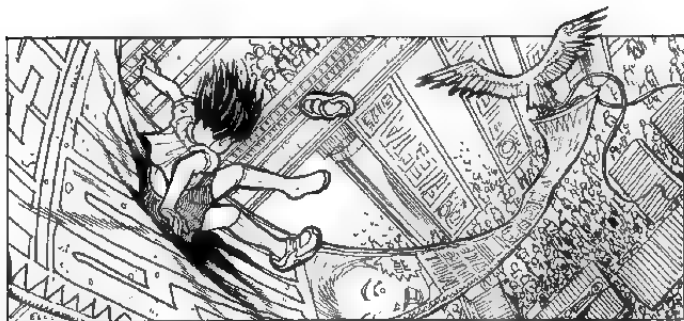


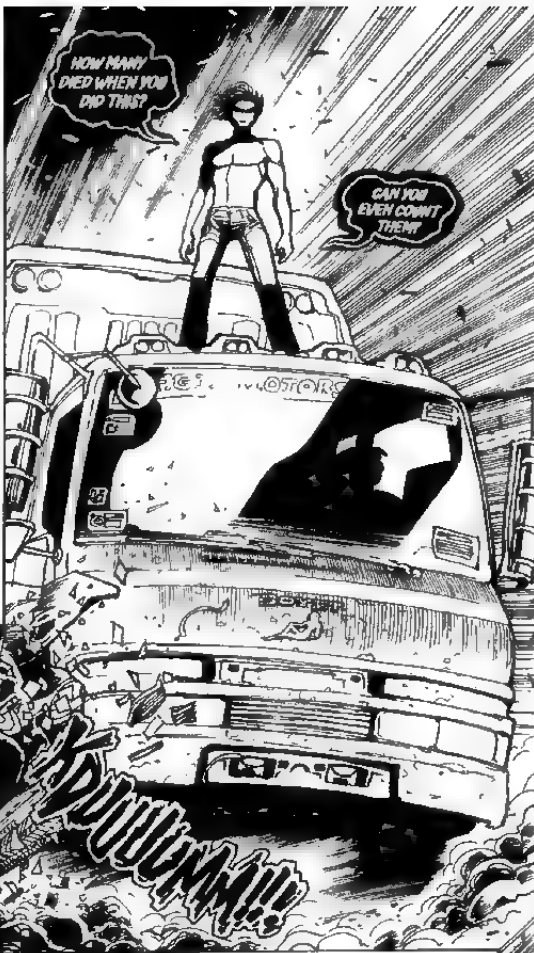


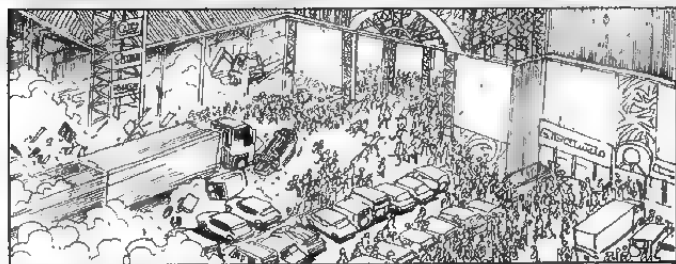
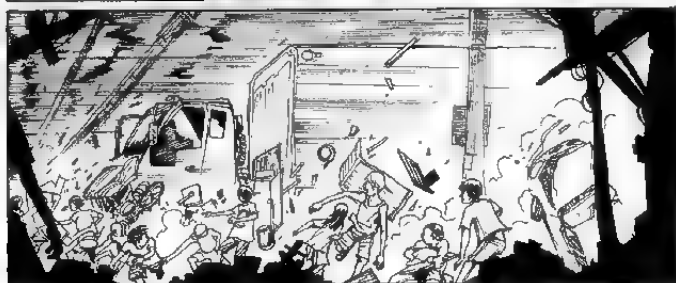






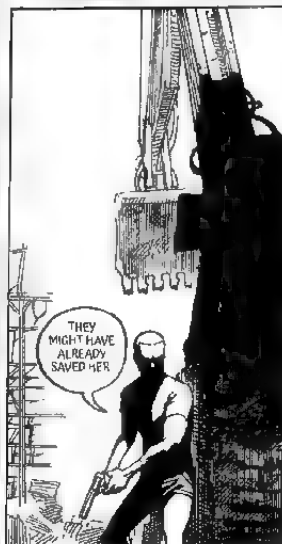
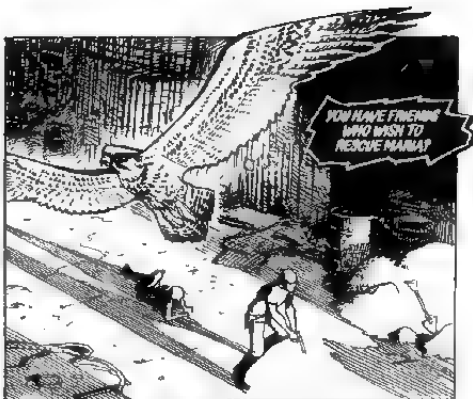


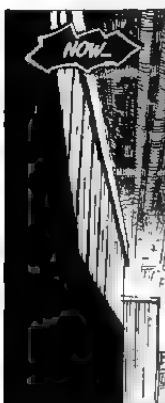
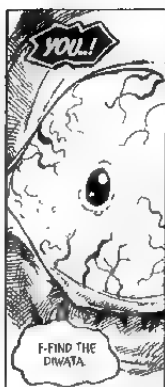


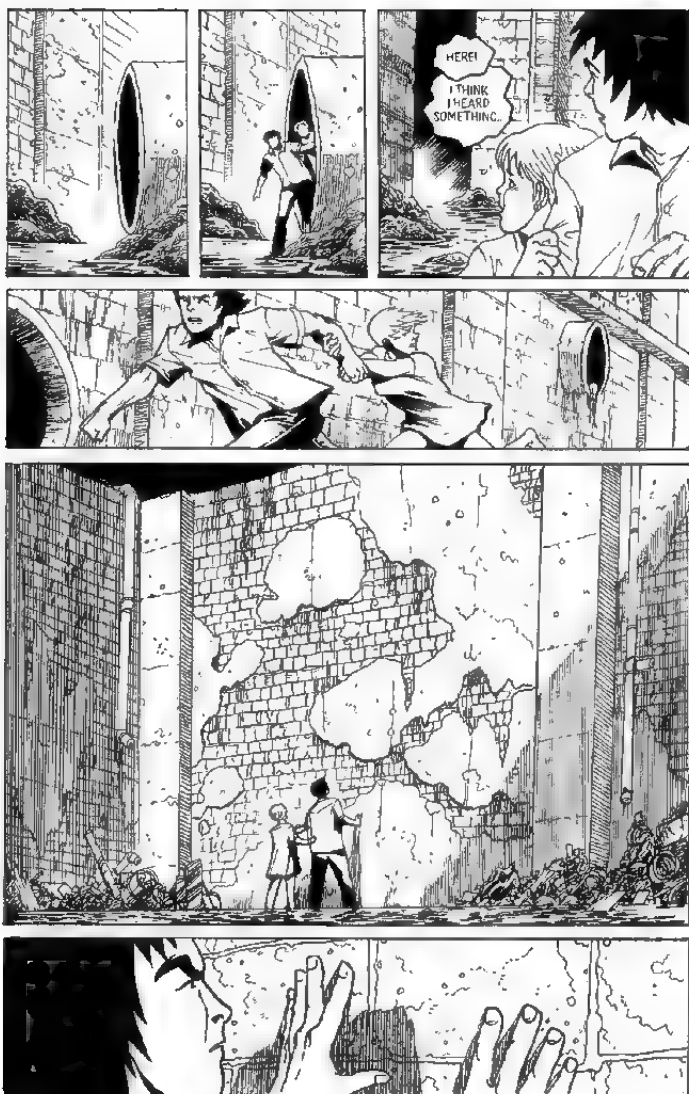




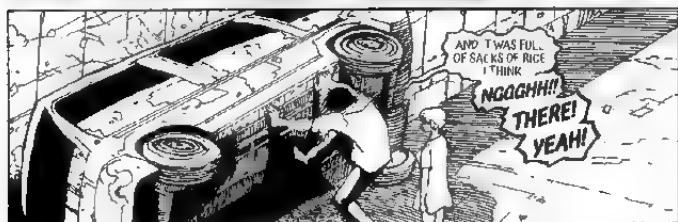


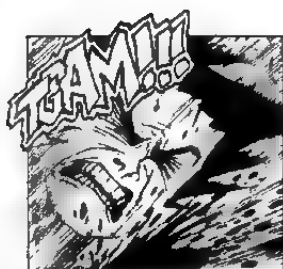






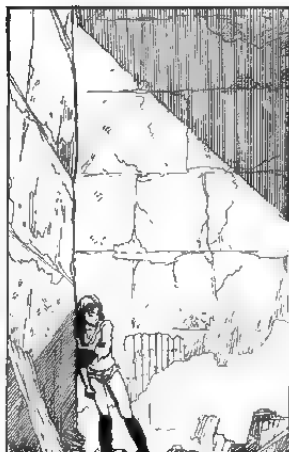










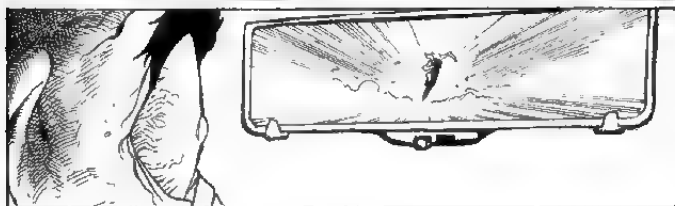


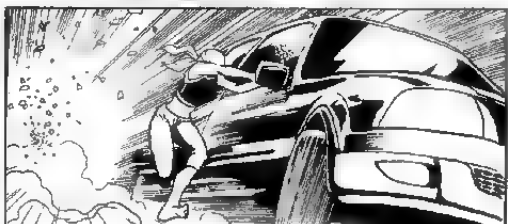
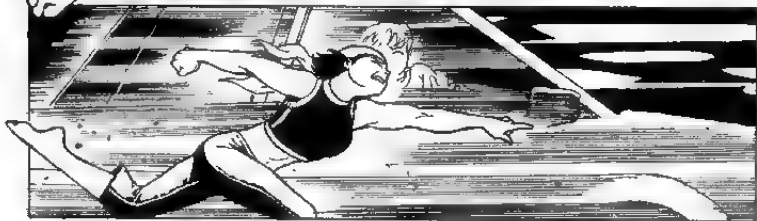






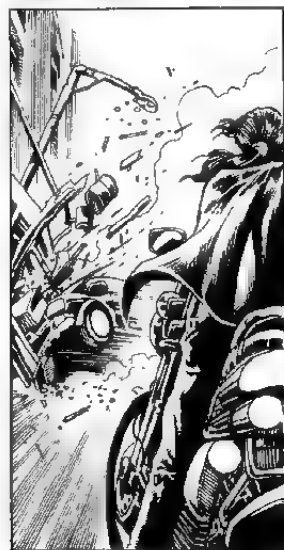
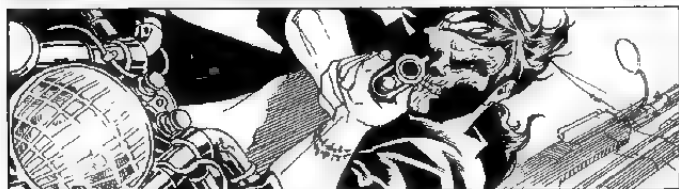
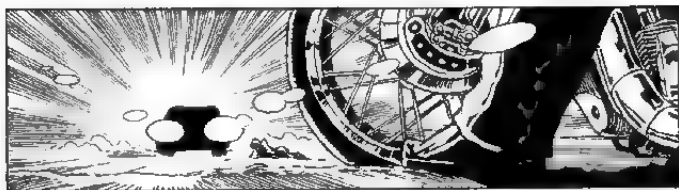


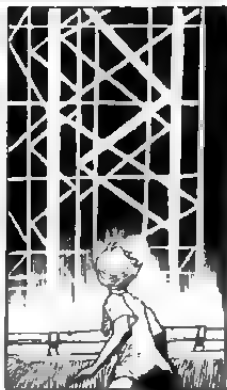
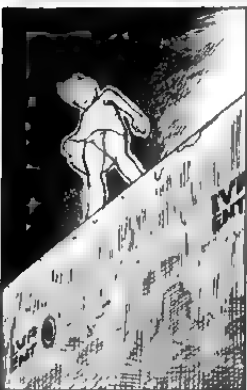
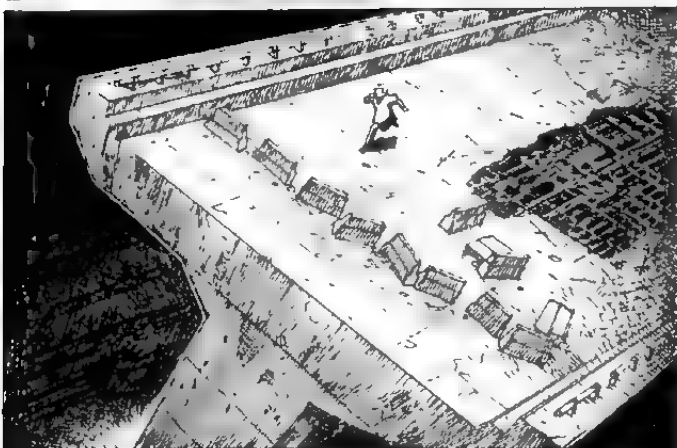








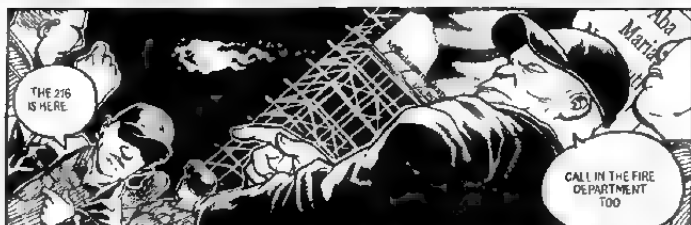






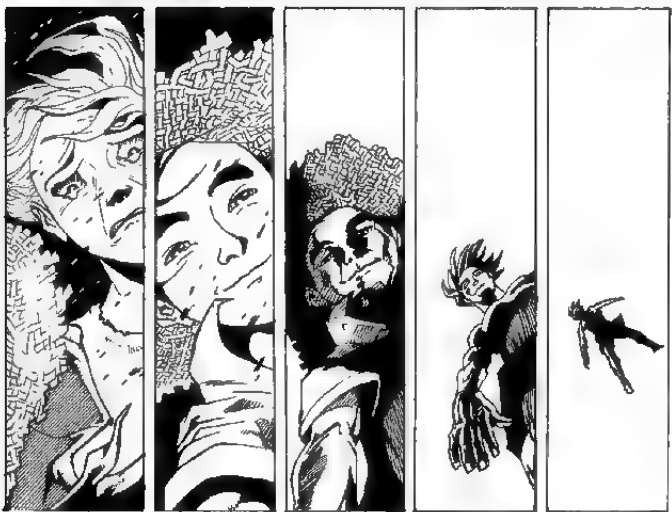


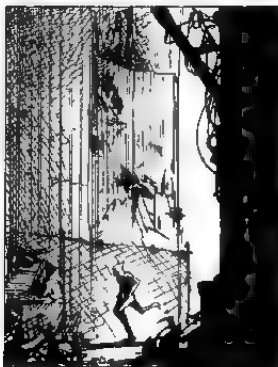


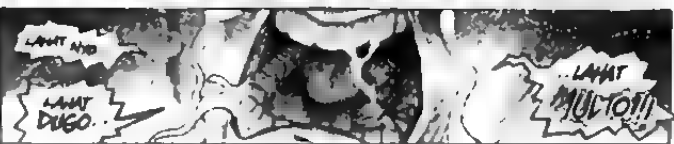








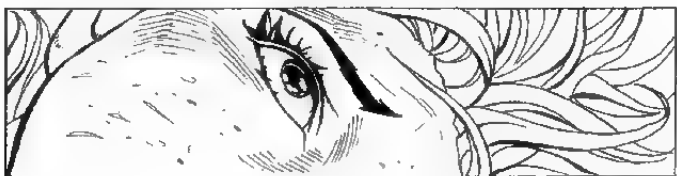




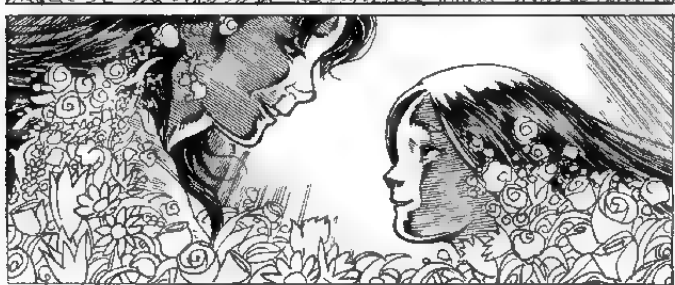


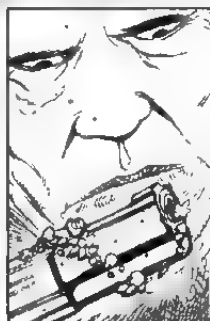
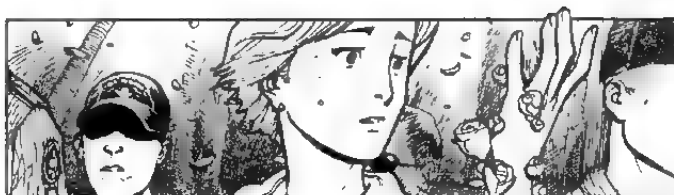


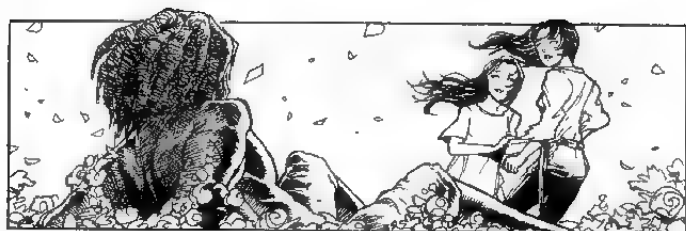




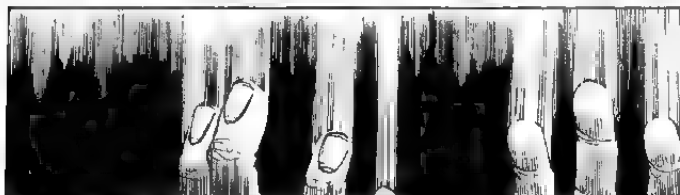


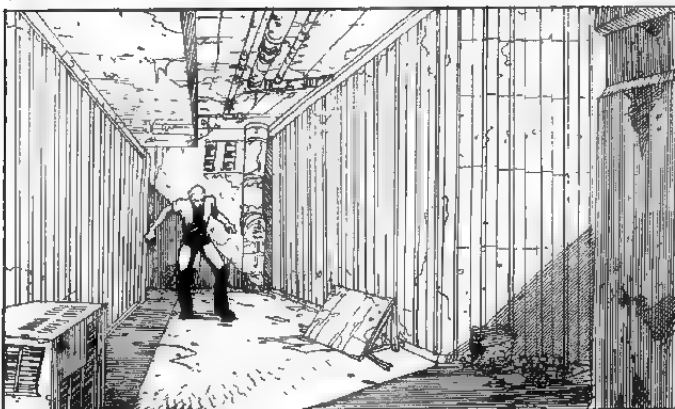




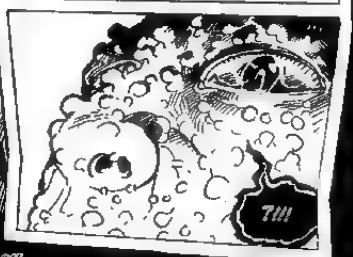


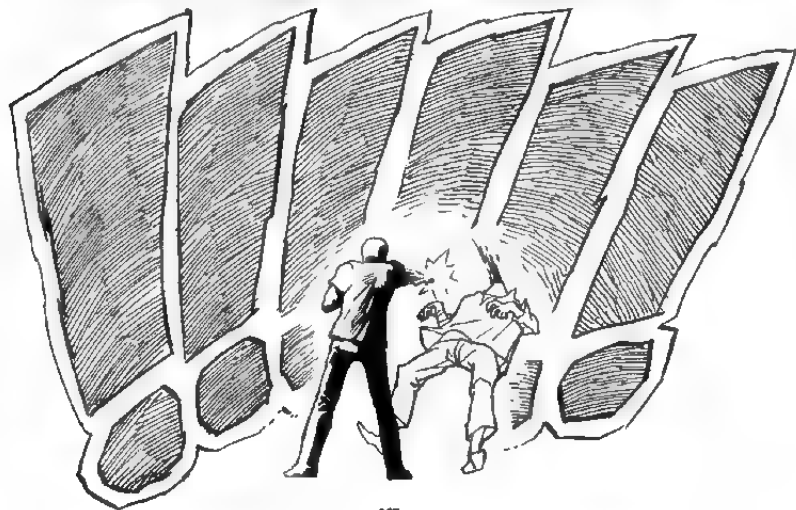


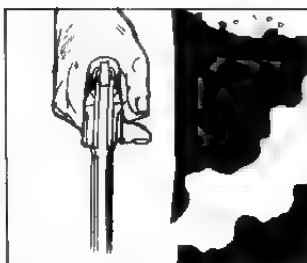




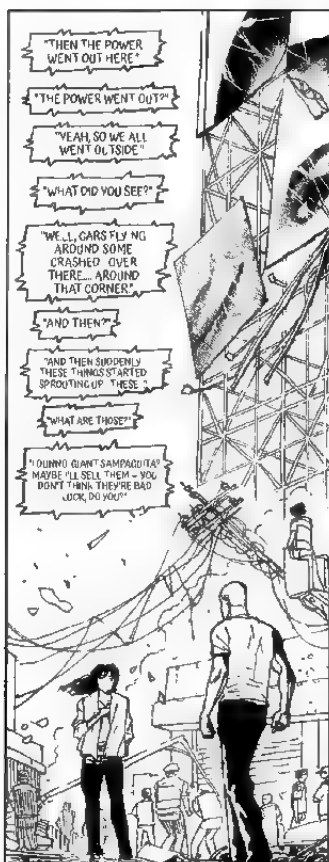






















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ARNOLD ARRE won the inaugural graphic novel Philippine National Book Award in 2000 for *The Mythology Class*. He is the author and illustrator of many other popular works, including *Martial Law Babies*, *Halina Filipina*, *After Eden*, *Trip to Tagaytay* and the *Children of Bathala* series.



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